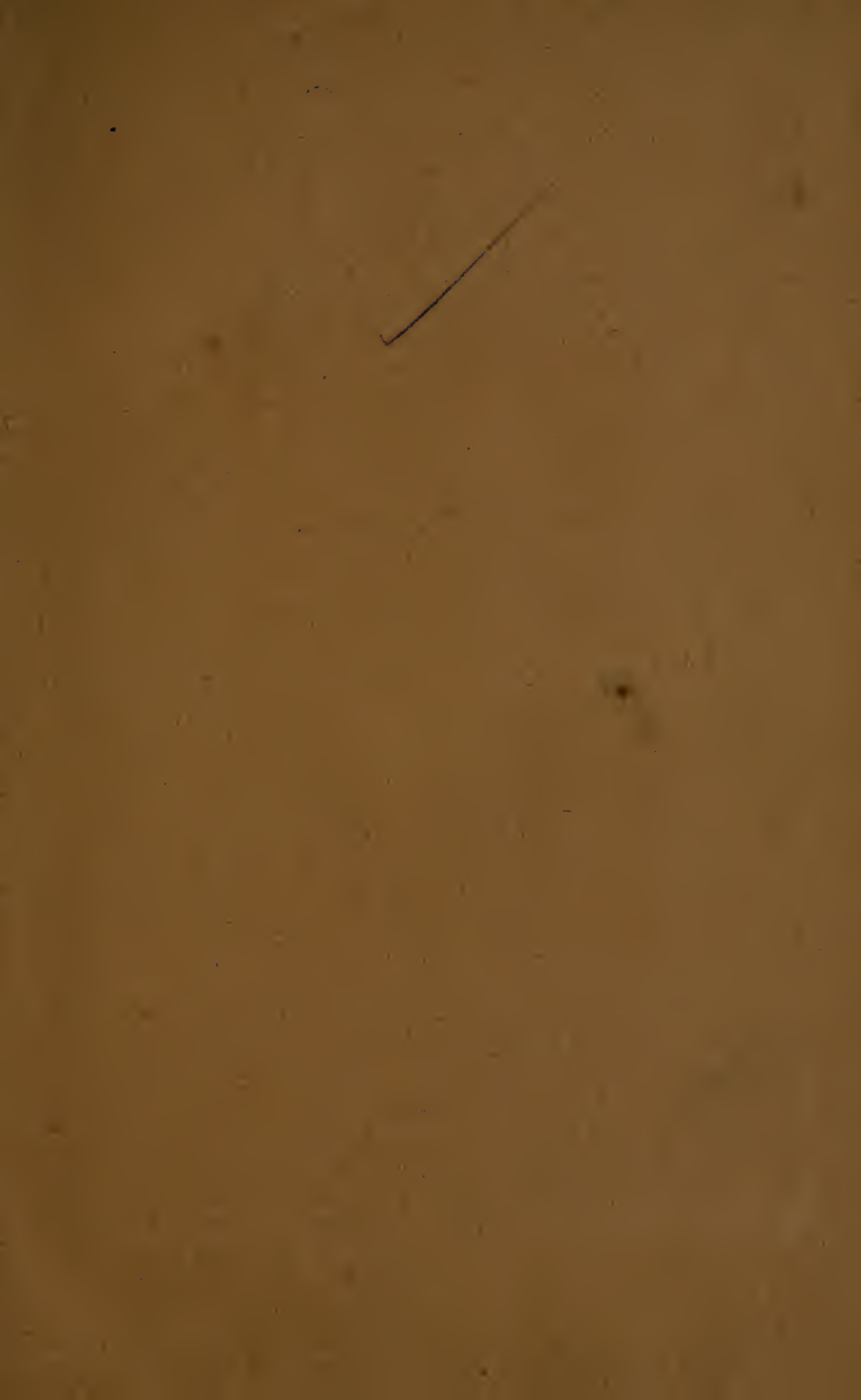




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Scottish Education Bill.

REPORT

OF

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE

ON

MR. GORDON'S RESOLUTION

IN FAVOUR OF

"INSTRUCTION IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES IN THE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS,"

Adopted by House of Commons on Monday Evening, 6th May, 1872.

GLASGOW:

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The following Resolution, proposed by E. S. GORDON, Esq., M.P., on Monday Evening, 6th May, 1872, was adopted by the House of Commons, by a majority of 216 to 209 (82 Members, as in Appendix, having paired on the question), making 507 Members in all:—

“That, having regard to the principles and history of the past
“educational legislation and practice of Scotland, which
“provided for instruction in the Holy Scriptures in the
“public schools as an essential part of education, this
“House, while desirous of passing a measure during the
“present Session for the improvement of Education in
“Scotland, is of opinion that the Law and practice of
“Scotland in this respect should be continued by provisions
“in the Bill now before the House.”

On the Resolution being put as the “*main question*,” the Government declined to divide upon it, and it was adopted unanimously.

SCOTCH EDUCATION BILL.

ON the order of the day for going into Committee on this Bill,

Mr GORDON said—Mr Speaker—The second reading of this Bill followed so soon after its publication, that there was no time for eliciting public opinion with respect to its provisions; and on the occasion of the second reading I stated that we reserved to ourselves perfect right and liberty to proceed by way either of resolution or amendments in Committee for the purpose of getting rid of many of those provisions which I apprehended would be thought of an injurious character as regards both the secular and religious instruction of the people of Scotland. Time has now been given for the expression of public opinion, and I venture to say there never has been a Bill which has elicited a stronger opinion against its provisions in many respects, whether as regards the managing body which is to superintend education in Scotland, as regards the interests of the schoolmasters, or, above all, as regards the religious system which has hitherto characterised education in that country. Last year there were against the Bill then brought forward 903 petitions, which were signed by about 70,000 persons. In favour of the Bill there were 51 petitions, signed by 4800 persons. Of course, on both sides there were what may be called corporate petitions. This year, I find there are against the Bill, out and out, 174 petitions, signed by 33,000 persons. Then there are petitions of a far greater number, generally in this form: they pray for alterations, with a view to securing the religious system which has hitherto prevailed in Scotland, and that, if that prayer was not granted, the Bill should be rejected. The petitioners did not wish to prevent an examination of the provisions of the Bill, and an amend-

ment of those provisions in Committee; but if the amendments suggested, especially with reference to securing religious instruction in Scotland, are not adopted, then the Bill should be rejected. Including some presented to-day by myself, there have been nearly 1,500 petitions, signed by 200,000 persons, praying for alteration in this way, laid on the table of the House. From these are to be deducted the signatures of about 30,000 persons who seem of late to have taken a great interest in Scotch education—I mean those connected with the Birmingham League. They have presented petitions against the Bill in respect of its containing in the slightest degree any approach to an allowance of religious instruction. The result is that there are upwards of 200,000 petitioners representing against the provisions of this Bill as not securing religious instruction, and the House must keep this in view when they are considering the number of those who have signed the petitions—viz., that Scotland has only one-sixth of the population of England, and that, therefore, these petitions represent a very large body of petitioners. If the list of petitions for this session be examined, it will be found that no subject of imperial interest has secured a larger number of petitioners. Therefore it is quite clear that there is in Scotland a strong feeling in regard to the provisions of this Bill; and that instead of the people of Scotland being satisfied with its provisions they are very much dissatisfied with them, and they pray the House to make alterations—and material alterations—in the Bill. These petitions have been the result of public meetings, which have been held for the purpose of discussing the terms of the Bill, and numerous publications have issued from the press with regard to its provisions. Men of the highest position and intelligence have taken part against the provisions of the Bill. A meeting has lately been held in Edinburgh, which was presided over by a nobleman whose name is very much respected not only in Scotland but everywhere else where he is known—I mean the Duke of Buccleuch—and that meeting was attended by many other influential persons, who made a strong protest against the Bill, and especially with reference to its destructive tendency as regards religious instruction. Men of all churches have taken part in this discussion—men connected with the Established Church, the Free Church, and other dissenting bodies; and lately, even many belonging to the United Pres-

byterian body. I refer particularly to the laity of the last body, for I admit that most of the clergy of that body are not actuated by the same feelings. All the teachers connected with the parish schools, and most of those in the Free Church schools, and other schools in Scotland, have expressed in the strongest manner their dissatisfaction with the provisions of the Bill, and in particular with respect to its provisions as regards religious instruction. They feel that their power to discharge their duty as teachers would be very much hampered by the provisions of the Bill in this matter, and they think it is essential that there should be a power in the teachers to give religious instruction. Then I may quote the opinion of one who may be regarded as an impartial witness in this matter, for he is not connected with any of our Presbyterian Churches. I refer to Bishop Eden, the Primus of the Episcopal Church in Scotland. With reference to the Bill of 1871, which did not go nearly so far in discouraging religious teaching as the present Bill, he said "it was impossible to compare the scheme of education proposed by this Bill with the system which has so long prevailed in the parish schools of Scotland, without feeling that, however unintentional on the part of the framers, the measure must prove a great blow and heavy discouragement to religious education, and as such run counter to the old traditionary feelings of the country. The real distinction between the two schemes is—that the one is a scheme for imparting secular education based on religion, the other a scheme for a similar object, but professedly not based on religion." Having regard to these strong, and, as I venture to think, unexampled expressions of opinion with reference to the provisions of the Bill as regards religious instruction and the great importance of the question itself, I have thought it would be right to bring this question now before the House, and not to trust to its being taken up incidentally in the very unfavourable way in which discussions arise in Committee. I have accordingly placed on the paper the following resolution:—"That, having regard to the principles and history of the past educational legislation and practice of Scotland, which provided for instruction in the Holy Scriptures in the public schools as an essential part of education, this House, while desirous of passing a measure during the present Session for the improvement of education in Scotland, is of opinion that the law and practice of Scotland in this respect

should be continued by provisions in the Bill now before the House."

This resolution certainly is not moved by me with any party object, but solely in order to secure the important object which I hold to be essential in education. To show that my views are not taken up for this occasion, and are shared by the constituency which I represent, I may mention that I was unsuccessful by a small number in 1868. In 1869 I again sought the suffrages of my constituents, and on that occasion I made the following statement in my address:—

"A marked feature in the education which has hitherto prevailed in our parochial, and in most of our other schools, and which I am desirous should be continued, has been that the children have had the opportunity of obtaining instruction in religion of a scriptural and unsectarian character. Whilst I hold that no educational measure can be considered satisfactory which does not acknowledge such religious instruction as a part of the national system, I am most anxious to see provision made that, as heretofore, no violence shall be done to conscientious convictions; the right of the parent to withdraw his child from such religious instruction being clearly recognised."

I had the good fortune to be returned by the constituency by a majority of upwards of 500, so that in bringing forward this resolution I am redeeming the pledge which I then gave to my constituency. (Hear, hear.) I am not desirous to offer any obstruction to the passing of an Education Bill. In the course of Friday last I was told it was rumoured that the object of my resolution was to throw out the Bill. (Hear, hear.) I certainly had not any such intention, and to make this more clear I altered its terms. The resolution is one which, if carried, clearly admits of the Bill being proceeded with; and the only effect of passing the resolution would be this, that the Government would have an opportunity of reconsidering the provisions of the Bill with respect to the opinion of the House, if the resolution is assented to. I understand that it is not likely the Bill will make much progress before the Whitsuntide holidays, so that there will be abundant time to reconstruct its provisions in conformity with the resolution. I am not here advocating the interests of any Church. I am not here maintaining the right of the Established Church to continue in the management of the schools. I think they were deprived of their

management to a great extent in 1861. But I wish to get this resolution passed in the interests of the religious instruction which has hitherto prevailed in Scotland. We were told on the second reading that this Bill would be reconsidered with reference to the suggestions that were then made; but, looking to the amendments on the paper, I find that only two, and these the most trifling, have been made by the Government. Therefore we have now to deal with the Bill as it has been fully canvassed by the country, and I feel compelled to bring the question of religious instruction before the House by this resolution. The Government certainly cannot be wedded to this Bill, because in 1869 they brought in a Bill which I venture to think was different in its character, and which did not overturn the provisions for religious instruction which had hitherto existed in Scotland. That Bill received the sanction of this House, and I wish that the Government would adopt the system which then passed this House, and which would not interfere with religious instruction as this Bill does. It is not necessary for me, in the view which I take of the position of religious education in Scotland, to raise the abstract question as to the duty of the Government with regard to religious education in State schools. I myself have a very strong opinion on that question. I think that if the Government take the management of education out of the hands of parents, and even compel parents to send their children to school, that Government should assume the position of the parents; and if the parent is bound to educate religiously, so the Government is bound to take care that religious education is given to the children. (Hear, hear.) I do not think there is a single member of this House who will dispute that it is the duty of the parent to educate religiously, and I think it follows that when the State assumes a duty of this kind it is bound to act in a religious way. At the same time, it will be quite understood that this is consistent with the most perfect toleration towards the children of those parents who may decline to receive such education. It has always been the practice in Scotland to exempt from religious instruction any child whose parents objected to his receiving such instruction: and this is the way in which the conscience clause, as it has been called, is carried out. We have no written conscience clause, but the conscientious scruples of the parent have been respected, and there has never been any complaint whatever. (Hear, hear.)

It is no answer to this resolution to say that a different custom has been followed in other countries. You have found it necessary to deal with English education in one Bill. We are dealing with Scotch education by another Bill. You will have to deal with Irish education by another measure. This seems to be the view of the Home Secretary, whose name I have before had occasion to quote in reference to this matter of education, and whose opinion I quote the more readily because he has given such attention to the subject. In addressing his constituents in Renfrewshire, he said—"He could not but think that the large experience gained during the great discussions on the English Bill had been of great service in the preparation of the Scotch Bill. He ventured to assert as much last year, and he was taken to task by some severe critics, who charged him with a desire to import into the Scotch Bill the principles of the English Bill. Nothing could be further from his mind, or the minds of his colleagues. They, as practical men, felt that the case of England and the case of Scotland were entirely different. In England it was necessary to create a system, whereas in Scotland there was a national system already, and all that required to be done was to build on the foundations thus afforded, and to extend the existing system in the spirit in which it was originally created." (Hear, hear.)

Mr BRUCE—That has reference to the course of instruction given in the schools.

Mr GORDON—Precisely so—but part of the instruction given in the schools has always been religious instruction. (Hear.) I quite accept the confirmation of what I say which has been given by the right hon. gentleman. Religious instruction has always been part of the education that has been given, and therefore I have the present authority of the right hon. gentleman that I have correctly quoted him.

I shall now proceed to state to the House how the system was "originally created," to quote the words of the Home Secretary. The first Act which bears upon the subject was passed on the suggestion of John Knox and his colleagues, in 1567, and says:—"Forsameikle as be all laws and constitutions, it is provided that the youth be brocht up and instructed in the fear of God and gude maneris, and gif it be otherwise it is tinsel baith of their bodies and saules gif God's Word be not ruted in them: Quheirfor

our sovereign Lorde, with advise of my Lord Regent, hes statute and ordained that all schulis to burgh and land, and all universities and colleges be reformed; and that nane be permitted or admitted to have chairge and cure their in time coming, nor instruct the youth privatelie or openlie, but sik as sall be tryed be the superintendentes of visitoures of the kirke." Here was a public declaration by the Legislature of Scotland that it was necessary the youth should be brought up in the fear of God; and the manner in which it was sought to secure this end was by putting religious education in the schools under the superintendence of the Church. It was then thought, and truly, that if you placed this matter under the superintendence of the Church you would secure the religious instruction which the preamble of the Act assumes and declares to be necessary for the good of the community, and the object of the enactment. Statutory provision to the same effect was also made when the Church became Episcopal. Then the schools were placed under the management of the bishops. When Presbyterianism again became the State religion, the schools were placed under the management of the presbyteries. In 1696 amended provisions were made imposing burdens on the proprietors for the support of the schools; and it was then declared that all former statutes concerning the schools were ratified and confirmed. In 1803 the salaries of the schoolmasters were increased, and provision was made with reference to the mode of admission of the schoolmaster to his office. It was enacted that before admission to his office the presbytery should take trial of his efficiency for the office "in respect of morality and religion, and of such branches of literature as by the majority of heritors and ministers shall be deemed most necessary and important for the parish." The presbytery were the absolute judges as regards religion, and it is clearly implied that religious teaching formed one of the duties to be entrusted to the schoolmaster, while the branches of "literature" to be taught by him were alone left to the heritors and ministers. From that time down to 1861, the schoolmaster was required to sign what was called the formula of the Established Church and Confession of Faith. In 1861, in order to relieve the schoolmasters from the necessity of signing the formula of the Established Church, it was declared that any teacher might be admitted as a schoolmaster without signing the formula; but as this was held to be getting rid, to a certain extent, of that which was regarded as a

security for religious teaching and the religious character of the schoolmaster, it was declared in the Act that the schoolmaster should sign a declaration to the following effect:—"I, A. B., do solemnly and sincerely, in the presence of God, profess, testify, and declare that, as schoolmaster of the parochial school at ——, in the parish of ——, and in the discharge of the said office, I will never endeavour, directly or indirectly, to teach or inculcate any opinions opposed to the Divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, or to the doctrines contained in the Shorter Catechism, agreed upon by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, and approved by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, in the year one thousand six hundred and forty-eight, and that I will faithfully conform thereto in my teaching of the said school." Now I have seen it argued in a publication which reached me this morning, that the effect of this provision was not to secure that religious instruction should be given by the schoolmaster. But the House cannot fail to observe that on the second reading of the Bill the Lord Advocate used strong words. The *Lord Advocate* (Moncreiff) said, "One object of the Bill was "to abolish the exclusive test that the schoolmaster should belong "to the Established Church in Scotland. *On the other hand, it provided that they should TEACH the Holy Scriptures, and the Shorter "Catechism, as set forth by the Westminster Confession of Faith.*" This was an arrangement between both sides of the House, in order to bring about what was thought desirable, but without interfering in the least with the security for religious teaching. Mr Mure, then Member for Bute, occupied the position of *ex-Lord Advocate*, and so understood it; and after his appointment to the Bench, as a Member of the Schools Commission, he stated that the declaration was equivalent to a distinct direction for religious teaching by the Holy Scriptures and the Catechism. We have, therefore, those who were concerned in the passing of this Bill putting a construction on that declaration. I venture to say that any one who reads the declaration can construe it, even without such light, in no other terms than as an expression that the schoolmaster was to teach the Scriptures, while he was relieved to a great extent from the superintendence of the Church. The 13th clause of the Act of 1861 accordingly provided that there should be a prosecution for violation of the declaration, but no such violation has ever occurred. Such are

the legal enactments bearing upon the teaching of religion in the parish schools of Scotland. It has been said, however, that the heritors could exclude religion. I venture to say in the most positive terms, and as a lawyer, that that is not correct. It was not correct, I apprehend, before 1861. It cannot be said to be correct since 1861. We have the opinion of Lord Advocate Moncreiff, who brought in that Bill, that it was his intention to provide directly for the teaching of Scripture. Now, I think that if any schoolmaster had attempted to evade his duty the courts would have interfered and compelled him to discharge it. If not, a prosecution would have been competent under the 13th clause of the Act of 1861.

The LORD ADVOCATE—There is no such prosecution possible under that clause.

Mr GORDON—I think if my right hon. friend looks at the 13th clause, which I have not beside me at present, it will be found that that clause does maintain the authority of the presbytery to lay a complaint against any schoolmaster who has failed to comply with the terms of the declaration.

The LORD ADVOCATE—They must make a complaint to the Secretary of State.

Mr GORDON—I think a prosecution might be instituted at the instance of the presbytery, with the approval of the Secretary of State.

The LORD ADVOCATE—No; the Secretary of State must direct it.

Mr GORDON—I have not the Act before me. But assume that the Secretary of State may direct a prosecution, the 13th clause contemplates a prosecution for violation of the declaration. So much with reference to the legislation.

I have next to ask attention to what has been the practice or custom of religious teaching in Scotland. The Holy Scriptures have been the subject of instruction in all schools, for they have been read and taught; and also the Shorter Catechism. These were used also in the schools of the Presbyterian Nonconformists in Scotland. There were only 45 schools belonging to the United Presbyterian body. They send their children to the parish schools, and they avail themselves of the teaching of Scripture without the slightest objection. The practice is to respect the rights of the parents of the children, and if any parent objected, his child was withdrawn while the religious instruction was given.

In Glasgow, where you might expect to find the greatest number of those who would avail themselves of their privilege or right of withdrawing their children from religious instruction, there is at present a school under the superintendence of the Established Church. It has 1300 pupils, and only 22 of them have asked to withdraw from religious instruction. You have, therefore, 98 per cent. who are glad to avail themselves of this instruction, and only 2 per cent. who decline to do so. The Roman Catholics have also availed themselves of the parish schools in which this instruction is going on. We have had Roman Catholic priests examined, and they state that they would prefer the present system to that which it is proposed to establish under the present Bill. They are quite satisfied with the present system. In the report of the Commissioners on Scotch Education in 1867 it is stated—"It has been seen already that the parochial school partakes of the character which is common to all Presbyterian schools, of being entirely undenominational as respects the attendance of scholars." In this respect there never has been in Scotland any material difficulty arising from what is called the religious or conscience element. So long ago as 1829 the Education Committee of the General Assembly reported that "the teachers had been directed not to press on the Roman Catholic children any instruction to which their parents or their priest might object, as interfering with the principles of their own religion." In 1832 the same committee again recur to the subject, and state that "by this toleration these Protestant schools have been everywhere acceptable and attractive to the Catholic population." That is the case at the present day. Teachers in Scotland have respected the rights of parents, and they have never given any cause of complaint to either Roman Catholics or Presbyterians. I might quote also the opinion of the Episcopal Church of Scotland as regards the existing system. Last year, the Lord Advocate, when introducing the Education Bill, said—"The religious difficulty has not, and never had, any practical existence in Scotland. There had not been obtained by any provision of law a conscience clause in any public school; nevertheless they had always been conducted as if a very precise clause had been in operation." Again, this year he said that "there was no religious difficulty, and that the parents of all the children attending the schools were content with the system. There were no heart-burnings or complaints upon the subject. They were quite content with it." Now, if

the parents of the children educated at these schools are satisfied with the system which at present prevails, where is the necessity for making any change in the system of instruction in the schools? (Hear, hear.) But what is the way in which this matter is dealt with? The Bill recites the Acts of Parliament, including the Act of 1861, which contains that provision as regards the declaration, and the last clause professes to amend these statutes; and that by repealing them altogether—(hear, hear)—not with reference to matters contained in the Bill; but an absolute and complete repeal of the Acts specified, and of all other Acts bearing upon the schools of Scotland. Having thus made a *tabula rasa* of the statute book as regards education, and of the system of education which was considered so advantageous, great credit is taken that “while the Bill does not prescribe, it does not proscribe religion.” But while the Bill does not directly and absolutely oppose religious instruction, much is done to discourage and discountenance it. (Hear, hear.) It is mentioned chiefly for the purpose of excluding it and setting it aside. Before we go into Committee I think it is necessary that the House should now express their opinion in reference to a Bill which is so framed. It is obviously a question of principle, which it would be of great importance to settle before we go into the details of the Bill. I therefore think it is expedient that we should now consider this question of principle; because if we have it settled in accordance with the view for which I contend, we should be much better able to deal with the details of the Bill. I may mention this, that the mode of dealing with this question now is very different from that which was followed in former Bills brought in by Liberal Governments. In 1854 a Bill was brought in for the purpose of making an amendment in the law of education in Scotland. It was brought in by the then Lord Advocate Moncreiff, by Lord John Russell, and Lord Palmerston. The preamble stated that “Whereas instruction in the principles of religious knowledge and reading of the Holy Scriptures as heretofore in use in the parochial and other schools in Scotland is consonant to the opinions and religious profession of the great body of the people, while at the same time ordinary secular instruction has been, and should be, available to children of all denominations.” Here is a direct recognition of religious instruction in the Holy Scriptures being consonant to the wishes of the great body of the population: and, ac-

cordingly, the 27th clause of the Bill, which passed this House, contains a direct provision requiring the schoolmaster to give instruction in religion at definite hours, and securing, as the then Lord Advocate stated, that religious instruction should form part of the ordinary teaching of the school—"Every School Committee shall appoint certain stated hours for ordinary religious instruction by the master, at which children shall not be bound to attend if the parents or guardians object." It was not then left to be determined by the local Boards, but was made the subject of direct legislative enactment, in a Bill which recognised religious instruction as being of the essence of education in Scotland. In the present Bill there is no duty whatever laid upon the schoolmaster to provide for religious instruction, differing, in that respect, from the Bill of 1854. There is no removal of a teacher for irreligion. I may explain to the House that the Scotch educationalists have shown a strong jealousy of the proceedings of the Privy Council, and they have been successful hitherto in not being brought under the operation of the Revised Code of 1862. The right of the Scottish people to be exempted from the operation of the Code has been acknowledged by successive Governments. I think they were right in giving exemption from the Code, which has been modified to a great extent by the present Government, and the lowering tendency of which has received such strong condemnation in the second report of the Commission on Scientific Education. I mention this because at present the grants which proceed from the Privy Council are under a code which provides that they shall be given to schools in which there is religious teaching, and no person in Scotland has objected to that provision. In this Bill there is an express declaration that none of the Privy Council grants shall be given for the purpose of religion. The 65th clause is that which I think imposes the greatest restrictions on religion. In England it is provided that "the *time* or *times* during which any religious observance is practised, or instruction in religious subjects is to be given, shall be either *at the beginning or the end*, or at the *beginning and the end*, of *every meeting*, and shall be inserted in a "time-table." In the Bill before the House (clause 65), the first part of which is unobjectionable, but the last part is in these terms:—"In every such school the *secular instruction* on each ordinary school day shall be continued during four hours at least, and no instruction in religious subjects shall be given, and no

religious observance shall take place, except *before* the commencement *or after* the termination of the *secular instruction* of the day, and the *time* for instruction in religious subjects, and for religious observances, *if any*—(hear, hear)—in a school shall be specified in a time-table to be approved of by the Scotch Education Department.” This is a provision which points at no religious instruction being given, and in any case permits it only once a day. In the English Bill, when you were establishing a new system, and people were jealous of the working of the Bill, and therefore required a specific direction, four times were permitted each day; whereas in this Bill the time for religious instruction, if any, is to be confined to one part of the day. I venture to think that it would be impossible, and I have the opinion of Scotch schoolmasters of every denomination upon the subject, to give religious instruction in this way. (Hear, hear.) You must recollect that a school is made up generally of five or six classes, who have made different progress in secular and religious knowledge. You must deal with these classes separately; and how can you get through the religious instruction if you are to confine it to one period of the day? It would be impossible for the teacher, who is the principal person to look after this matter, to give attention to [five or six classes at the same time. This is a provision which is very much opposed to the practice that has hitherto prevailed in Scotland. This provision would also entirely prevent your giving any instruction in infant schools or night schools. The matter does not rest here, for it is to be in the power of the managing Board to regulate the hours. The effect of such a system as this—so inconsistent with what has prevailed in Scotland—would be destructive of both secular and religious teaching in Scotland. We have a jealousy of the Privy Council in Scotland, and one which is not groundless, especially after the recent declaration made by one who was closely connected with the tribunal, and was concerned with the preparation of the Code of 1862. What did the Chancellor of the Exchequer say this spring at Halifax?—“It is the duty of Government to have the children of the State educated, just as it is to establish a police and to see to the safety of society. That being the case, the Government did not in any degree discharge its duty by delegating it, not to persons chosen by themselves, but to any number of persons who came forward to found schools. That system I was never weary of denouncing, but I am sorry to say

that in so denouncing it I met with very little, if any, support in Parliament; and not being able otherwise to reform the system, I, in conjunction with my colleague, Lord Granville, hit on the scheme of payment by results, which had a particular value of its own, because it tended to secure a sufficient quantity of work for the money paid for it. But it had another and further advantage. By paying for secular results, and giving no payment at all for religious instruction, we adopted a system which tended very forcibly to the secularisation of education." Here is a declaration from a high authority on these matters, as to the working of the Privy Council; and I think we have reason to dread our coming too closely under the Government of such a body. My right hon. friend on the other side, in the course of the discussion which took place on this Bill, also said he had himself great sympathy with the Secularist party in this sense, I assume that he would not have religious instruction given in the schools by the schoolmasters, but that there should be separate provision made for the instruction of children by other persons. Now, religion is also excluded as part of the subject of examination in schools. The Bill of 1869 provided that inspectors should not be entitled to examine upon religion, unless they were requested to do so; but the present Bill does not even allow that privilege to the parties in charge of schools. The inspectors are absolutely forbidden to make any investigation as to religious teaching in schools. There is a further clause of some importance, the 66th. It seems to be framed with a view to escape from the difficulty raised by the 25th section of the English Act, which is that the school boards should afford the means of education to any poor child. The 66th clause provides that it shall be the duty of the school board in every parish and burgh to make provision for the "elementary education in reading, writing, and arithmetic" of every child; but no provision is made for the religious instruction of the children of the poor. That is not according to our system. We do not want to change the system which has existed so long, and which has been regarded as so efficient in Scotland. It is said that it might be left to the local Board to determine whether religious instruction should be given or not, but we do not wish it left in that way. (Hear, hear.) We are subjects of a Christian country which recognises the Bible as the basis of morality and public order. (Hear, hear.) If the

State assumes to itself the duty of providing for the education of young children who have been neglected by their parents, it is the duty of the State to make offer to these children of such religious instruction as has hitherto been given in Scotland. (Hear, hear.) We do not want this important question to be made the subject of electioneering cries and tactics. It is the duty of the State, as a Christian State, to go as far as possible in the way of recognising Christianity and the Holy Scriptures. What we want is, that there should be, as in the Bill of 1854, direct provision made for the instruction of children in the Holy Scriptures. In whose interest is an objection made to that proposal? Not in the interest of the children or of their parents; because, as the Lord Advocate has told us, the present system has worked satisfactorily in Scotland, and has caused no heart-burnings. (Hear, hear.) If that be so, why not let it be continued? ("Hear, hear" from the Lord Advocate.) I am glad that that meets with the assent of the Lord Advocate. But I think this matter is clear with reference to the special circumstances of Scotland. There are two classes of persons who may be said to object to it. First, there are those who are opposed to Christian instruction, as tending to fetter the human intellect. I do not believe that they are a body of any great influence, but still it is right in these times, when the Holy Scriptures are not only openly attacked but attempted to be secretly undermined, that the State, in dealing with the education of the young, should give no uncertain sound in this matter. (Hear, hear.) We ought to avail ourselves of the opportunity of recognizing the Holy Scriptures as a most important element in the education of children. Again, there is a class of persons who say that the teaching of the Bible is contrary to religious equality, because they may be taxed to an infinitesimal extent in order to provide the funds required for giving religious instruction in the schools. I can quite understand these voluntaries objecting to religious instruction being imparted by the State to the adult population; but I am unable to comprehend how they can deny the propriety of the State providing for the religious instruction of the young. These gentlemen, many of whom, I admit, are excellent Christians, say the religious instruction of the children should be left to the parents and the Churches. But surely it is ludicrous to talk of leaving religious teaching to those parents

who neglected to give their children even secular instruction, and whose neglect has rendered direct compulsion necessary in order to force them to send their children to school. A recent investigation has shown that in Glasgow about 130,000 of the inhabitants never go to any place of worship at all, and it would not be consistent either with sound sense or justice to trust to such parents giving religious education to their children, and to give the children a secular education only. (Hear, hear.) Again, the Churches cannot reach the children of these people. It is vain to say that with persons belonging to no recognized form of religion there can be any religious education for their children, except in the school and by the schoolmaster. (Hear, hear.) It is sought to get rid of this matter by relegating it to the local Boards. There will be heartburnings, then. The London School Board declared that the Bible should be read as a book of instruction in every school; but the London Board ruled a population as large as that of Scotland. It would be a very different matter to put the question before every small parish. You would have local strife engendered; and the question would be brought forward again and again. I venture to think that I have stated grounds for the proposition which is contained in this resolution. I use the words public schools in it with reference to rate-aided schools.

Nonconformists have not always held the same language on the subject of education which they utter in the present day. (Hear.) In 1847 a document was sent out explanatory of the views of the Nonconformists of that day on the subject of religious education. They were then of opinion that "there could be no sound system of education unless religion were combined with it," and that "religion must be married to education." "To thrust religion out of the schools," they said, "and to bid her go hence, is what neither conscience nor religion would permit, and it would deprive us of the last and best hope of seeing effectual education in the land." I have seen, in a paper to-day, the name of Dr Chalmers mentioned as opposed to the view expressed in the motion which I am now proposing to the House; but the remarks were made by him, not with reference to a national system of education, but with reference to indiscriminate grants of the Privy Council. In reference to a system of education in Scotland, Dr Chalmers used this unmistakable language:—"We will place the Word of God in the forefront of our system of

education, and we will render it the unequivocal and public homage of making it conspicuous, as is becoming in a Christian and Protestant nation." (Cheers.) The strong and almost unanimous expression of the people of Scotland is in favour of this motion. I put it even to hon. members on the other side of the House whether they have ever known any question which stirred up to a greater extent the feelings of the people of Scotland, or which interested them more than this question of education. I would ask hon. members on the other side whether they are prepared to disregard the wishes of the people of Scotland in regard to the duty of the State in giving education to include religious instruction. If the resolution which I have placed upon the paper were adopted, I have no hesitation in saying that it would be most agreeable to the feelings of the people of Scotland. The hon. and learned gentleman concluded by moving, "That, having regard to the principles and history of the past educational legislation and practice of Scotland, which provided for instruction in the Holy Scriptures in the public schools as an essential part of education, this House, while desirous of passing a measure during the present Session for the improvement of education in Scotland, is of opinion that the law and practice of Scotland in this respect should be continued by provisions in the Bill now before the House." (Loud Applause.)

The LORD ADVOCATE said it would not be becoming on his part to detain the House with a premature and unprofitable discussion of a question which would regularly and usefully come under their consideration when they got into Committee. (Hear.) His hon. and learned friend said this motion was not brought forward for any party purposes, or with a view of placing any impediment in the way of the progress of the Bill; but he wished he had told the House with what view it was brought forward. His first objection to the motion was that it was altogether unnecessary; whatever the existing law in Scotland might be, and however entitled to approval, no preliminary resolution was necessary to enable the House to bring the provisions and framework of the Bill into conformity with the existing law if this had been departed from. The resolution for that purpose was not necessary. Besides, it was not competent to instruct a Committee to do what the Committee had in the ordinary course of business power to do without any instruc-

tion whatever. His second objection to the resolution was this—it proceeded on an altogether erroneous assumption of the law on the subject. (Hear, hear.) The mist which it was attempted to raise by a jumble of words as to “the principles and history of the past educational legislation and practice of Scotland” was easily blown away. It was hardly worth raising. But it was altogether an error to say that there was any law in Scotland, legislative or otherwise, which provided that instruction in the Holy Scriptures in the public schools should be an essential part of education. (Hear, hear.) But if his hon. and learned friend was of opinion that the law should be in conformity with his resolution he would have the opportunity of stating his views in Committee, as he had given notice of an amendment to that effect. With regard to the practice in public schools, he had stated that himself, perhaps too frequently, in the speeches to which his hon. and learned friend referred. The practice was in entire accordance with the statement of his hon. and learned friend. It had been the practice, not only in the public schools of Scotland, which were subject to any law that existed on the subject, but also in the voluntary schools, which outnumbered the public schools by three to one, to give instruction not only in the Holy Scriptures, but in the Shorter Catechism. He entirely approved that practice especially taken in connection with the fact which his hon. and learned friend had correctly stated, and for which he justly claimed credit to the managers of existing schools, that that instruction in religion was given at such times and in such manner that no child should be called on to receive it whose parents and guardians did not approve it. (Hear, hear.) Instruction in religion, and especially in Bible teaching, was given, not under a conscience clause, because no such thing existed in Scotland, but under an unwritten conscience clause, on which school managers had acted, and of which he entirely approved. He had stated as distinctly as he was able to state that the law of Scotland at this moment left schoolmasters at perfect liberty to act in this direction as they pleased, and the only criticism he would now make on the practice was that their Bible instruction had been too little, too feeble, and too inefficient. (Hear, hear.) So far as he could judge from the reports of the inspectors, there had been a great failure, probably owing to no want on the part of the teachers, but to the want of that power, which he hoped would be supplied

by this Bill, to teach religion in that effectual and efficient manner which was desirable. He hoped the results in future would be very different from what they had been, if he could judge from the reports to which he had adverted. He was not at all complaining of the practice in Scotland. On the contrary, he entirely applauded it; he only wished it to be made more efficacious. His honourable and learned friend said—he repeated it over and over again—that if the people of Scotland were entirely satisfied with the existing system, why change it? He did not propose to change it in the least degree for the future—there was no legislative provision with respect to the teaching of religion now. The schoolmaster was subject to a certain test, but he was not enjoined to teach religion. He was not even required to profess his belief in the Holy Scriptures. He was expressly relieved from expressing his belief in the Confession of Faith, and from subscribing it. What he undertook was, that he should not directly or indirectly inculcate anything opposed to the Divine authority of Holy Scripture. He was not to teach that the Scriptures are not of Divine authority—he was not to teach anything to the contrary of their Divine authority, but he was not required to teach anything on the subject. He did not say whether that was right or wrong. He was not dealing with the subject at all in this Bill; he left schoolmasters very much as they were at present, only interfering so far with those who elected them that they should not in future, as in the past, be selected exclusively from members of the Established Church. Supposing for a single moment that there was any law on this subject such as his hon. and learned friend put forward, without being able to put his finger on a single enactment—nothing could be easier than to say you shall teach the Bible, you shall teach the Shorter Catechism, or anything else, it was almost impossible to use words intended to have that effect which any man reading them could misconstrue. But there was no such provision in any Act whatever; and, suppose there was such a provision, it would only apply to parish schools, or one-fourth part of the schools in Scotland. But there is no difference in schools in this respect. The practice in the other three-fourths of the schools is in entire accordance with the practice in the parish schools. There was, therefore, no necessity for any legislative enactment on the subject. He was content to leave the subject where it was—with the pious,

religious feeling of the people themselves. But if his hon. and learned friend thought otherwise, he might move his amendment in Committee. He should, therefore, vote against this superfluous resolution. (Hear.)

Lord H. SCOTT could not regard this as a superfluous resolution. After looking carefully into the provisions of the Bill, he could not help thinking that it was most necessary that expression should be given to the general feeling of the people of Scotland on this subject. (Hear.) The object of the instruction was, not to defeat the Bill, but to give effect to the general feeling in Scotland with regard to this subject. No doubt that point could be discussed in Committee; but when the clause specifying the time for giving religious instruction established an arrangement differing almost entirely from the former usage in Scotland, there seemed to be good ground for laying down some first principle, in reference to which they might embark on the discussion. (Cheers.) If there was any part of the United Kingdom where no religious difficulty might be said to exist it was Scotland, and therefore he could not understand for what reason they were now asked to change the system of education which had hitherto obtained in that country. In this respect, as well as in other characteristics, the present Bill differed from the Bill of 1869, and, consequently, it was not unreasonable that some discussion on these points should now be raised. It was proposed to take the whole of the parochial schools out of the hands of the present managing bodies, and to enact the establishment of compulsory School Boards; although the learned Lord Advocate had himself given credit to the existing school managers for the manner in which they had conducted the schools in Scotland. There was really no complaint on that head. It was true that in 1869 it was proposed to make some alteration with regard to heritors in the different parishes, and it would have been better if the same provision had been retained in the present Bill, for he was certain that, under the measure before the House, the bodies to elect the School Boards would not be so good. He believed that to a great extent the parochial schools in the country district afforded a sufficient amount of education, and it was in the towns and burghs where the great educational want existed. The formation of School Boards in burghs and towns was the thing needed, but he could not understand why School Boards were to be forcibly established

in the country districts of Scotland. There was in the Bill a further provision which aimed against the establishment of voluntary schools. The House had determined in respect to England not to discourage voluntary denominational schools, or to exclude them from the benefit of the Parliamentary grant; but the present Bill contained a provision which would make it difficult for any denominational school to receive a grant of money. With respect to the proposal that Scotch education was to be dealt with by a department of the Privy Council in England, he thought it would be a great misfortune that that education should be entirely intrusted to that department. Holding these views, he would cordially support the resolution of his hon. and learned friend. (Applause.)

MR M'LAREN—Sir, I should deprecate as much as any hon. member entering into a long discussion on the principles of this important measure, now that we are on the threshold of considering its details in Committee. I am anxious that we should proceed as earnestly and as rapidly as is consistent with good legislation with the clauses of the Bill as it stands, not wasting time by entering into an interminable discussion of any principal feature. I should give my voice in favour of passing the Bill with all its defects rather than incur the risk of losing it altogether, for the time we have left to get it through is not too long. Still the Government themselves do not appear to be satisfied with the measure in all respects, for they have proposed several amendments, and I have myself taken the liberty to propose several, including one which, when the proper time arrives, I shall endeavour to convince the House is worthy of its consideration. That amendment I placed on the notice paper the day after the Bill was printed. It is one that provides that instruction may be given in the public schools on religious subjects from the Bible, but that no Catechism or formulary whatever shall be taught in any of the Government public schools. According to my reading of the instruction now moved, its principle is identical with the spirit of my amendment, and therefore I shall have no hesitation in supporting it. I am quite aware that many hon. friends do not take the same view. I only express my own opinion, and I am quite willing that they should retain theirs. In reference to my proposed amendment, I may say that eighteen months ago I addressed a large meeting of my constituents at Edin-

burgh, when the question raised was whether the Bible and the Shorter Catechism should be enacted as part and parcel of the education of the people of Scotland, and I took the liberty of saying then that I thought it would be wrong to enact the Catechism, but right to enact that the Bible should be read and taught in preference to all other religious books in the schools. Six months ago, at a second annual meeting of the same kind, I repeated my statement, and from that time down to the present I have received numerous petitions to present to the House on the question of education, and multitudes of letters, both from persons I do and many whom I do not personally know, and not one of the writers found fault with the sentiments I expressed. (Hear, hear.) I hold these sentiments, whether popular or unpopular; and believing as I do that the instruction now before the House is not inconsistent with them, I am the more inclined to give it my support. The resolution or instruction, indeed, seems to me three times as long as it need be. It is enveloped in a multitude of words, but the proposition is simply that the law and practice of Scotland of providing that there should be instruction in the Holy Scriptures in the public schools, should be maintained. My hon. and learned friend the Lord Advocate has argued that this is not the law of Scotland, but he has not attempted to argue that it is not the practice in that country. On the contrary, he has affirmed that it is the practice in Scotland, and rejoices that it is. I rejoice with him that it is the practice—(cheers)—and I am anxious to see that good practice confirmed by enactment in the manner provided for by my amendment. If it be asked why I desire to see it enacted in different terms than those which formerly existed, my answer is, that by this Bill the whole management and all the appointments of the schools in Scotland will be entirely changed, and unless the rule is laid down in the Bill, every parish in Scotland will become a battle-field, and the discussions will be endless as to whether the Bible alone shall be taught, or whether the Bible and the Catechism, or whether any religious instruction shall be given, or whether it shall be left altogether to the Churches. There are many influential friends and relatives of my own—earnest and religious men—who are most anxious that religious instruction shall not be taught in the schools, but that an organisation of the Churches shall take place, by which religious education shall be made much

more of a reality than it is now, much more of a truly religious character, and by which teachers of known religious character shall be appointed instructors. If I saw the least prospect of such a result, I should greatly rejoice, and most willingly vote in favour of no religious instruction being given in the schools; but I don't see the shadow of a prospect of the kind. If you think that the children would receive religious instruction at the hands of their parents, I am very much afraid that the children in many cases are as well able to teach their parents on religious questions even now as the parents their children; and it is my firm opinion that if such instruction is not given at school, in many cases it will not be given at all. (Hear, hear.) It is enacted by the Act of Union between the two countries, and other Acts of Parliament with which Scotch members are familiar, and in particular is well laid down by the Act of Settlement of the Crown, that Scotland was a Protestant country, and that she should be so for all time. (Cheers.) I hold by that principle firmly—(hear, hear)—and I agree with the well-known words of Chillingworth, that the Bible is the religion of Protestants, and I want the religion of Protestants to be taught in the public schools of Scotland by reading the Bible and giving a fair explanation of its meaning in these schools. There was one thing which was said by the Lord Advocate with which I could not agree. He went on in his argument to prove that there was no enactment to compel the teaching of the Scriptures. In all these Acts, which I have read over and over again, I find that the spirit there is the same, assuming that the Bible is to be taught. When the learned Lord Advocate read the declaration in the Act of 1861, he omitted a very important portion of that declaration. If he had read the whole of that declaration, it would have appeared plainly that although there were no such express words requiring religion to be taught as peremptory as “Thou shalt not steal,” or “Thou shalt not kill,” yet by implication the Act of 1861 is as plain as anything can be that religion was taught, and that it should continue to be taught in the schools. The declaration was—“I do solemnly and sincerely, in the presence of God, declare and testify, that I, being a schoolmaster in a parochial school, in the discharge of my said office, will never endeavour, direct, or undertake, to teach or inculcate anything contrary to the Divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, or the doctrines contained in the Shorter

Catechism." My hon. and learned friend read down to those words; but what are the words that follow? "agreed upon by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, and approved of by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1648; and I will faithfully conform thereto in my teaching of the said school." If you ask the teacher to say that he will not only teach nothing opposed to the Holy Scriptures and the Shorter Catechism in the schools, but faithfully conform thereto, does not that imply that he shall teach the truths of the Holy Scriptures? But if you, on the other hand, go on the principle of demanding the exact pound of flesh, and ask me to point out an exact enacting clause that the Bible must be taught, I admit that it is not forthcoming. But all history concurs in showing that education in Scotland has been imbued with these views, and that an epitome of Bible instruction and history has always been taught. Some hon. members object to the teaching of what they call the Scottish Catechism, but they seem to have forgotten that it was framed under the orders of the English Parliament, by an assembly of 120 divines, 20 members of the House of Commons, and 10 Peers, and that there were among them only 6 Commissioners from Scotland, including 4 ministers. It was this Assembly that framed the Catechism. It was adopted by the English Parliament in 1648. From the time it was adopted down to the present time it has in practice been held and maintained as embodying the principles of religious instruction given in the schools of Scotland. (Hear, hear.) Why do I ask that we shall lay down a rule in this Act of Parliament, when I admit it is not now laid down and yet has been so long acted upon? It is simply because, if we do not introduce some rule of the kind, the school Boards will introduce various rules for themselves, and all sorts of differences will arise. When the 6th clause is before the House, I wish to introduce words, according to my notice, which will exclude all Catechisms from the schools, and permit that the Holy Scriptures alone shall be taught; and I consider that it would be a great evil if we did not lay down the rule now, because a struggle would commence and be frequently renewed in every parish in which there was a school Board, and the battle would be fought out over and over again. It is therefore plainly a matter of expediency that the question should be dealt with now, and settled once for all. If my object is effected, I do not care whether it is effected by this instruction or by my own amendment following

after words in its proper place; nor do I care under what circumstances this resolution has been brought forward, for my amendment is honestly intended, and I shall certainly move it on the proper occasion. (Cheers.)

Sir J. PAKINGTON asked whether the Government would offer no reply to the admirable arguments of his hon. and learned friend (Mr Gordon)? Was a subject so deeply interesting to the feelings of the Scotch people to be passed over almost in silence? For more than 300 years the Scotch had had the benefit of a system of education which Englishmen might well envy. They were conscious of the blessings they had enjoyed under that system, the leading principle of which was the inculcation of religion and of the Bible. (Hear, hear.) People could not forget the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer at Halifax, in which he expressed his preference for a secular system; nor did he stand alone, for the President of the Local Government Board also expressed at Halifax the same preference. Now, the great bulk of the people, both of England and Scotland, were strongly and directly opposed to the secular system, and they wanted to know why religious education was thus slighted. There might be a handful of members in this House, and a minority in some parts of England favourable to secularism, but he asserted, without fear of contradiction, that the great body of the people desired to maintain religious instruction in our schools. (Loud cheers.) Scotland, which more than any other country had proved its attachment to religious teaching, now found its system of education about to be dealt with by a Bill, the provisions in which for religious instruction did not even equal those provisions in the English Bill, to which, as a matter of compromise, he and his friends had reluctantly assented. The speech of his hon. and learned friend had not been adequately answered, and he hoped that no attempt would be made by hon. gentlemen opposite to smother this discussion, convenient as it might be for the Government not to enter into it. (Hear, hear.)

Mr ORR EWING—I had expected, from the nature of the resolution of my right hon. friend the member for the Universities, and from the assent to the terms of the resolution apparently given by my right hon. friend the Lord Advocate, when the resolution was proposed, that he would have assented to it, and allowed the Bill

to go into Committee; but the right hon. gentleman declines doing so, on the ground that while religious education has been the practice in all schools in Scotland, yet that there was no enactment compelling this. He states that the clause in the Bill of 1861, which provides that a schoolmaster shall not teach anything contrary to the doctrines of the Holy Scriptures and the Shorter Catechism, but that his teaching shall be in conformity thereto, does not compel religious teaching. If he is sincere in thinking so, will he agree to place that clause of the Bill of 1861 in his Bill of this year? which, in my opinion, will be satisfactory to the people of Scotland. The Lord Advocate holds that his Bill neither prescribes nor proscribes religious teaching, but that he leaves it to local Boards to act in this matter as they do at present; but he forgets that the present Boards of management are not elective, but hold their right to manage the parish schools from a large property qualification, and that he substitutes for them Boards to be elected by £4 householders. I have the greatest confidence that any Scotch local Board will insist upon religion being taught in our schools, but this mode of electing Boards will create strife and turmoil in every parish where there is at present peace and contentment; for you will find in every parish one or two infidels, or extreme Nonconformists, who will agitate the question at every election, until parties, wearied by the contest, may assent to a secular system of education for the sake of peace. I therefore agree with the hon. member for Edinburgh, that we ought to have a direct enactment as to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures to prevent this unseemly strife. At present the schools in Scotland are not placed under the Revised Code. They are still under the old Code, which provides for the examination of schoolmasters in religion, the teaching of religion in our schools, and the examination of religion by the Inspector. But if this Bill passes the schools will be placed under the Revised Code, which prohibits the schoolmaster from being examined in religion, and prohibits the Inspector from examining the scholars in religion, and thus taboos religion. It is a godless Code, and a disgrace to any Christian nation, and repugnant to the feelings of the people of Scotland. I have no sympathy with the cry for Home Rule in Ireland, for I believe they have ulterior views which will end in the dismemberment of the empire; but if Home Rule means only the opposite of centralization, if it means that legislation should be in

accordance with the wishes of the country, then in that sense I am a Home Ruler. What right has the Government or the Lord Advocate, who may be elevated to the high office which he holds but for a few years, to thrust a Bill, out of his own caprice, against the acknowledged wishes of his country, upon Parliament? For there can be no doubt that the Scotch people fear this is an indirect way of bringing about what so many members of the Government have expressed their desire for, a secular system of education. They have not the courage to enact that directly, for they know that few members, if any, that supported such a system of education would ever again be returned to the House by a Scotch constituency. I bitterly regret that the right hon. gentleman's predecessor, the Lord Justice Clerk, who is an honour to Scotland, and was an ornament to the House, was not permitted to remain a little longer with us until he passed a Scotch Education Bill, for he thoroughly understood the question and appreciated the feelings of his countrymen. (Loud cheers from both sides of the House.)

Mr C. DALRYMPLE said the speech of the Lord Advocate had been answered by the hon. member for Edinburgh, but the speech of his honourable and learned friend below him (Mr Gordon) was unanswered. The Lord Advocate had said that the resolution was unreasonable because its matter might have been introduced in Committee as well. But what chance would his honourable and learned friend have had of being able to make in Committee such a speech as he had given this evening? (Hear.) It would have been said that it was a second-reading speech, and prejudice would have been raised against it on that account. (Hear.) The Lord Advocate had said that the resolution was erroneous, that his hon. and learned friend had raised a mist about the subject of the old law of Scotland. The hon. member for Edinburgh, however, had sufficiently answered that objection. The Lord Advocate had pronounced the resolution "eccentric." But the language of the resolution was such, that it could not be mistaken in Scotland, and if it was "eccentric" to move that the Holy Scriptures should continue to be read in the schools of Scotland as in past times, then commend him to such eccentricity. (Hear, hear.) He would ask a question which he had before put, Why was this Bill introduced? It was to supply the lamentable deficiency of education in the large towns of Scotland. But in supplying that deficiency, an opportunity

was taken by this Bill to upset the whole present system of education in that country, and, he would not say to prevent, but to abridge and restrict religious education in every possible way. And yet, he ventured to say that the class of children whom this Bill was specially intended to reach were those who, above all others, required religious training. (Hear, hear.) The demand was for a so-called national system, and he would say, not in any bitterness, but in all seriousness, that the nationality of the measure before the House seemed to consist in the omission of all direct enactments on the subject of religious education. During the short Easter Recess he had an opportunity of being present at two school examinations in the West of Scotland, in which the religious part was conducted in an admirable manner; but he could not help feeling, at the same time, that if this Bill were carried it was possible that no examination of that class might ever be held again. He was far from saying that this Bill would make it impossible to give religious instruction, but this he would say, that it threw every possible difficulty in the way. (Hear.) The people of Scotland were a law-obeying people, and if a measure passed this House which did not, indeed, prohibit religious education, but put all sorts of difficulties in the way, the people of Scotland might not find it possible to carry out their intentions. One of the greatest misfortunes of the Bill was that it would relegate the important subject of religious instruction in the schools to be fought out in every locality, and by passing the resolution this advantage would be attained, that at least there would be no dispute about the study of the Holy Scriptures. What was the object of the amendment? His hon. and learned friend had said, and said truly, that it was no sectarian object; it was not in favour of the Established Church of Scotland, or of any particular religious denomination. The instruction in the Holy Scriptures was a matter on which all were agreed, and which formed a bond of union between one denomination and another. While in the Bill they recognized the duty of the State to supply secular education, they ought also to recognize the duty of combining with it that religious instruction which was the basis of all true education. (Hear, hear.) If he believed that this resolution must necessarily be fatal to the Bill, he would not give it his support; but he did not believe that it must be attended by that result. Certainly that was not the intention of its framers, but the provision was so important, that they

ought not to neglect to have it confirmed at the outset, before going into Committee on this Bill. (Hear, hear.)

Sir G. MONTGOMERY expressed his astonishment that the hon. members on the other side representing Scotland had decided to take no part in this debate, for the number and importance of the petitions presented in favour of the view embodied in the resolution now before the House showed that the feeling in Scotland upon the subject was very strong. (Hear, hear.) It appeared to him that the present system of religious teaching in Scotland was as nearly perfect as it was possible for it to be, for Roman Catholics and Episcopalians might be found side by side in the parish schools; and, while the scruples of all were respected, no conscience clause was found necessary. They, however, objected, and objected strongly, to the establishment of School Boards in every parish, though they did not object to them where it could be shown that there was not a sufficiency of school accommodation. (Hear.)

Sir J. HAY would be sorry to give a silent vote upon this question, because, from the numerous petitions which he had presented, the subject was one in which the people of Scotland took a deep interest. So strong, indeed, was that feeling that a large majority of electors of the principal burghs (470 out of 670) represented by the Lord Advocate had signed petitions either against the Bill or in favour of such alteration as that now suggested. The strongest repugnance was evinced to the adoption of anything tending to alter what had certainly been the custom, and what he believed had been the law, of Scotland up to the present time—that all education should be based upon religious teaching. The custom of making religious education a part of the ordinary course of instruction was now about to be overridden. Having in his own district endeavoured to do what he could for the cause of education, he had received expressions of the strongest opposition to the Government measure, and it had even been suggested to refund the Privy Council grant in the case of a school of which he was the chief support if this Bill became law. It could not be said that any feeling of bigotry influenced the decision of the parishioners in this matter, for Presbyterians and Roman Catholics attended the school with satisfaction. As regards the Scotch Board, he remarked that the people of Scotland had no desire

to be governed in local matters from London, and would prefer a Board capable of being influenced at home. For these reasons he supported the motion of his hon. friend. (Hear.)

Mr BIRLEY said it was impossible to read the 65th clause without coming to the conclusion that there was a covert disposition on the part of the Government to crowd out religious education from the course in Scotch schools. Four hours was almost all the time at the disposal of the children, yet it was stipulated that four hours at least of secular instruction should be given to the children, and that religious instruction, if any, should be given before or after this four hours' secular instruction. The words "if any" clearly indicated the *animus* of the framers of the Bill. The Scotch people wished to retain their time-honoured religious observances, but the action of the Government clearly showed that in its opinion religious instruction was a superfluity. On the part of the great body of English members and English people he desired to protest against any endeavour to curtail the opportunities now afforded for religious instruction in Scotch schools, and he trusted the Government would give some definite assurance that clauses would be introduced to satisfy the people upon this point. (Hear.)

Sir J. ELPHINSTONE regretted extremely that the course adopted by the Government in seeking to ignore the cardinal and essential principles of the ancient system of education pursued in Scotland, and which had brought that country to its present position, had necessitated the proposing of that resolution. He regarded that as a godless and an infidel Bill, because if it did not entirely exclude religious teaching from its provisions, it made that teaching depend upon the whim or caprice of an ignorant School Board, who might be acted upon by various causes, and in whose hands, therefore, the education of the country could not be safely placed. He was himself educated at the parish school of Musselburgh, and could state that religion was the foundation and pervaded every part of the instruction given there. The various bodies of Presbyterians in Scotland were all agreed in the main points of their creed, and all held that Holy Scripture and the Shorter Catechism, the production of the greatest Protestant divines, were the basis of education. This measure, therefore, was most dis-

tasteful to the people of Scotland, who ought to know who were the men who voted with the Government upon it. It was absurd to expect parents, who neglected their children and allowed them to roam about and fall into crime, to give them religious instruction, while a mere secular education would only serve to perfect such little street Arabs in the arts of knavery. Neither could the honest workman who toiled early and late find time to impart religious instruction at home to his children. That Bill, therefore, like everything else brought forward by Her Majesty's Government, was a "mockery, a delusion, and a snare." Their policy of pains and penalties—so conspicuous in the case of the Ballot Bill—reappeared here, because they proposed to subject the parent who refused to send his child to their godless schools to a fine of £5, or 30 days' imprisonment, the punishment to be repeated at intervals of not less than six months. The child itself also, if it absented itself from school without sufficient excuse, was to be apprehended without a warrant, and sentenced to imprisonment. That Bill was opposed by the whole body of schoolmasters in Scotland, with a proper *esprit de corps* and a due respect for religion. In that part of Scotland with which he was the most intimately acquainted, the salaries of the schoolmasters were almost equal to the stipends of the clergymen, in consequence of certain bequests which had been made for the purpose of increasing those salaries, and the result was that the school managers in the district could command the services of men of higher talent than they otherwise could have done, and that the education given was far superior to that given in other parts of the country. (Cheers.) The young men who had been educated in the schools to which he referred, were to be found in positions of trust all over the world, and they had one and all traced that power to resist temptations, and that earnest desire to discharge their duties faithfully that so greatly distinguished them, to the religious instruction which they had received at these parish schools. (Hear.) The question before the House was, how were those schools to be dealt with? The House was told that these establishments were to be handed over to School Boards. But how were these School Boards to be constructed? In the greater part of the north of Scotland the farms were exceedingly small, and the farmers, of whom the School Board would consist, were not themselves sufficiently well educated to fit them for discharging the duties which

would be imposed upon them. The attainments of a schoolmaster were not likely to have such weight with them as to counteract the family influence that would be brought to bear upon them by their well-to-do friends and neighbours. Most of the Education Bills relating to Scotland introduced into that House appeared to him to be brought forward rather as a compromise between conflicting interests than as the result of an honest desire to settle the question on sound principles. The statistical *data* upon which this Bill was founded showed, he admitted, that in certain parts of Scotland there was a want of school education for the young, and, for his part, he should be happy to follow the Government if they would bring forward any rational proposal for meeting the evil so indicated. He objected, however, to a sweeping operation which took no note of the various requirements, but forced what was termed a national system upon the whole country alike. Let the Government deal with the great centres of population, and erect schools for the education of the large numbers of children who were without it, but it would be most unjust and most unwise to deal in a similar manner with the rural districts, in which there was no want of educational power or of adequate administration, in which the standard of education was of the highest class, and in which a state of things existed with which the people were perfectly satisfied. Were the Government to pass this Bill in its present form they would find that they had only evaded and not settled the question. It was an extraordinary thing that the Scotch Liberal members in that House appeared to have received the command, "Silence in the ranks!" ("Hear, hear," and a laugh) and were afraid to speak. He challenged any hon. member on the opposite side of the House to answer him. ("Hear," from Mr Carnegie.) He was glad to hear the hon. member accept his challenge, and he trusted he would not be the only Roderick on the hill. ("Hear," and a laugh.) Hon. members on the other side of the House had been educated by the right hon. gentleman the Prime Minister, who had taught them to rob churches, to disregard the laws of property, and now he was endeavouring to force them to throw away the great talisman of our country—the religious education in our schools. Had he, four or five years ago, asked many hon. members opposite whether they were prepared to reject religious education in the Scotch schools, each would have replied,—“Is thy servant a dog that he should do this thing?” (Hear.) He trusted that the House would not

hastily throw aside principles which had raised this country to the pinnacle of glory, the principle of the "Cotter's Saturday Night," which had made our statesmen the highest in the world, and which had led our battalions to conquest in every part of the globe. (Hear.)

Mr CARNEGIE, in reply to the challenge of the hon. and gallant baronet, wished simply to say that a speech avowedly against time did not require an answer. (Ironical cries of "hear.")

Mr EASTWICK remembered hearing a statement by Mazzini, a man whose views, with respect to religion, were peculiar, but who, nevertheless, held strong religious opinions, that Christianity was fading out of the world. In proof of this he mentioned one country after another till he came to Scotland, where, after a pause, he said, "Well, if religion is left anywhere it is in Scotland." Now it was the noble ambition of the learned Lord Advocate to obliterate this distinctive feature of his country. ("Oh.") He had, indeed, disclaimed such a purpose, and had alleged that the Bill made no alteration with regard to religious teaching, but a more surprising statement had never been made in that House. It was obviously inconsistent with the petitions of 200,000 persons against the Bill. So far from making no change, the difficulty was to find a part of the existing system which was not changed by the Bill. It would place the general management of the schools under a London Board, a most obnoxious arrangement, and it would transfer the local management to School Boards. As to religion, where the greatest change of all was made, the Lord Advocate had maintained that there was no legislation on this point, but he overlooked the fact that use and wont was tantamount to law, and that it prescribed religious teaching in Scotch schools. Clauses 63 and 64 excluded such teaching from inspection and grants, and clause 65 provided that a child might be withdrawn from it, that it should not thereby be placed at a disadvantage, that the secular teaching should be continuous for at least four hours, which probably meant five or six, and that religious teaching should be given prior to or at the end of the secular instruction. Time also was allowed for recreation, and religion was not to be suffered to curtail the time allotted to anything else, even that given to amusement. Now, there was a difficulty in securing sufficient attention for a subject which the

pupil was anxious to learn, but what appetite would he have at the end of the day for religious teaching, the dullest of all subjects to a child? The Government had not, like the International Society, avowed their intention to turn their backs on God, but they would avoid His presence by endeavouring to hide themselves in the trees of the garden of secularism. (Cheers.)

Mr WHEELHOUSE said this Bill virtually announced to the people of Scotland for the first time that Her Majesty's present Government cared nothing whatever about religion. He wished to call the attention of members who professed Christianity to the placing of the two words "if any" in the clause which spoke of religious instruction and religious observances. The insertion of those words, "if any" meant simply that the Government, so far as they could, intended to ignore all creeds, and that it should not be necessary for the School Boards established throughout Scotland to require that religion under any formula, or by aid of any creed, should be taught in the schools under their jurisdiction. This was not merely a Scotch question; it affected the well-being of the United Kingdom. (Cheers.) He was astonished when he heard of the declaration made at Stranraer by the Lord Advocate that this Bill neither prescribed nor proscribed religion, for the measure was framed in a way that showed the Government did not want religion, and did not care about it. In the fashioning of this Bill the Government had treated religion in Scotland as one of the trammels of which they wished to get rid. The insertion of the before-mentioned two words "if any," was, to his (Mr W.'s) mind, an unanswerable proof that this was the spirit which dictated the framing of this Bill. He believed that not fifty of the teachers in Scotland desired that religious instruction should be severed from secular education. He regretted exceedingly that many of the representatives of Scotch constituencies who ought to have addressed the House, and whose votes might have affected the division on this subject, were absent. Why did they not speak? (Hear, hear.) Was their absence attributable to the knowledge they had that their constituents were opposed to the Bill? He knew that if the representatives of the constituencies in North Britain were by their words to support the views of the Lord Advocate, they would be immediately called to account for those words by their

constituents. (Hear, hear.) If a good Education Bill could be passed for Scotland, by all means let it be enacted, but let them not make a permissive denial of faith the basis of a Scotch Education Bill. He contended that this Bill not only did not prescribe religious instruction for Scotland, but actually proscribed it. What was it that had made the people of Scotland what they were but their determination, from time immemorial, that secular education should never be dissevered from religious instruction? Was it to be said that the time-honoured history of three centuries was to be forgotten or set at nought? and that, too, in a country where the memories of such men as John Knox still flourished and held place in the strong affections of his fellow-countrymen? He (Mr Wheelhouse) hoped, from the depths of his heart, that the day was far distant when the teachings of 1560 would be so ruthlessly swept away by any one,—least of all by those who professed so energetically that they had the education of the people of North Britain so warmly at heart. (Applause.)

Mr SCOURFIELD said there were common principles which equally affected England and Scotland, and which could not be violated in Scotland without prejudice to England. Such common principles were embodied in clauses 68 and 69 of this Bill, which provided that if a Board certified that a parent failed to provide elementary education for his child he should be prosecuted, and, on conviction, liable to a penalty not exceeding £5, or imprisonment not exceeding thirty days, the prosecution to be repeated every six months, and conviction to be without appeal. If the Bill passed with these clauses in it, what between Ballot and Education Bill, a large proportion of the population would be sent to gaol. Further, the Bill attempted too rigidly to separate religious from secular instruction, and would, in this respect be productive of great mischief, as, whilst intellectual training, entirely separated from religious, was deficient, so religious training, entirely separated from intellectual, might become *superstitious*.

Mr W. EGERTON referred to the proceedings of the Nonconformist Conference at Manchester in reference to this Bill, and said he should have expected some hon. member who spoke at that Conference to lay their views before the House. The mover of a resolution about this Bill said that on its principles and provisions

would depend the character of subsequent legislation for England and Ireland, and that this Bill furnished a precious opportunity for preventing in Scotland the evils which had been found so grievous in England, and for securing, as far as education was concerned, the separation of religion from all State supervision and control. That was the issue Nonconformists had raised, as regarded England, and were attempting to raise now. The Bill was their battle ground, and, if they could succeed in carrying it, they thought they should be able to apply similar provisions to England. (Hear.) He read the proceedings at Manchester in the light thrown upon them afterwards by the right hon. gentleman, the President of the Local Government Board (Mr Stansfield), who told hon. members who had proposed the repeal of clause 25 of the English Act that, if they would persevere, they would, in all probability, attain their object. The resolution, carried unanimously at Manchester, was to the effect that the Scotch Education Bill ought to contain no provisions that would permit religious teaching at the public expense, or give support to denominational schools. Therefore, the issue now raised was, Is religious education to be given in the schools of Scotland? If this Bill were carried for Scotland, there would be renewed agitation against the scheme in operation in England. (Hear.) This was a question well worth the attention of English members; and after what had occurred at Manchester, he should have expected that hon. members opposite would have stated their views here in order that they might be answered. (Hear, hear.)

Mr F. S. POWELL, while agreeing in the main with the hon. member for Leeds (Mr Wheelhouse), did not concur in the wish that the Bill should not pass; he wished to see passed this Session a Bill dealing vigorously, comprehensively, and finally, for the present, with education in Scotland. There had been too many Bills and debates, and the time had arrived for legislation, with fair discussion of details on both sides of the House. The hon. and learned member opposed the universal election of School Boards; but at present there existed throughout Scotland legally-constructed educational machinery; and the question now was not whether there should be in every parish an organization for the conduct of education, but what was to be its nature, what was to be the electoral body, and how the elections

were to be conducted. The speech of the Lord Advocate was characterized by a certain asperity of tone; it contained, however, one welcome admission as to the importance of religious instruction in the schools in Scotland. The proposing of the resolution had elicited a late and reluctant declaration of regard for religion in education in Scotland; and, as a lawyer, he wished to have that declaration in writing in the form of a statute. Recently he read with interest and sympathy a sorrowful letter addressed by the Under Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr Winterbotham) to his constituents, in which the writer stated that he was a member of the Education League, and that it was the opinion of himself, of the Prime Minister, and of his constituency, that the difference of opinion between himself and the Government was no reason why he should not hold his present office. Then, the hon. member added, there was a Scotch Bill which evinced a great advance in public opinion, and he had no doubt that that Bill, if it passed, would furnish a precedent for England. With that warning from one who was in training for the Cabinet, he was entitled to protest against the application to Scotland of doctrines abhorrent to his sentiments, and the application of which to England he would repudiate. (Cheers.) The Government could not complain of the length of the debate on this Bill. On the second reading debate was stifled or drifted from the main question, on a motion by an hon. member opposite who raised the flag, hateful both in Scotland and England, of secularism pure and simple. Again, they were witnessing that magnificent silence which concealed differences, and obscured, though it did not extinguish, animosities. The right hon. gentleman, the member for Bradford, was anxious for a religious education in England; the right hon. member for Halifax—at Halifax, but not in the House of Commons—was an advocate for secular instruction only. There appeared, therefore, to be reasons for the silence which was imposed on the other side. He hoped that mysterious silence would not continue, if they did not want to transfer discussion to Trafalgar Square. (“Hear,” and a laugh.) He desired a more emphatic declaration than had yet been given respecting the future educational policy for Scotland. There was a time-table conscience clause in the Bill, but it was far less favourable to religion than the conscience clause applicable to England. Denominational schools were also very unfavourably treated under this Bill. Parliamentary grants were not to be made to any

denominational school established after the passing of this Act, unless the State Department, after inquiry, should be satisfied that the school was specially required in the locality where it was situated, and that the majority of the children in attendance were of the denomination to which the school belonged. Now, he knew that there were episcopal schools in Scotland so popular that the majority of children attending them were Presbyterians, so that the managers of such schools were to be punished for the efficiency of the instruction given by being deprived of the Government grants. (Hear, hear.) He also objected to the three years' tenure of the School Boards, unless accompanied with the cumulative vote. He had not intruded himself into this discussion, as if it were one affecting Scotland alone—this Bill applied to Scotland in proposal only; but the precedent once established it would be extended to England. (Hear.) England had shown its adhesion to the cause of religious education; and if institutions were to be adapted to the feelings and sympathies of a nation, the public sentiment in Scotland must be admitted to be as strong in favour of religious instruction as it was in England. He therefore hoped this Bill would be amended so as to bring it into harmony with the feeling which had existed in Scotland for many generations. (Hear, hear.)

Lord GARLIES owned he felt considerable surprise when the Lord Advocate stated he could not accept the amendment of his hon. and learned friend. His objections to this Bill were twofold. First of all; it affirmed the principle of permissive secular instruction; and, in the second place, the Bill would supplant a system which had been in practice in Scotland for centuries, which had worked thoroughly well, and had become endeared to the hearts of the people. He denied that this Bill was for the benefit of the people of Scotland, for all the different religious bodies in Scotland had proved by their conduct that they desired to have religious instruction combined with secular. In proof of the accuracy of that assertion, he mentioned that above 1,670 petitions had been presented against the present measure. The population of the Wigton group of boroughs, which the Lord Advocate represented in Parliament, had no sympathy with the measure introduced by the learned lord. Two out of the four boroughs were decidedly opposed to it. The third borough was rather insignificant; and with regard to the fourth and large

boroughs, which practically returned the learned lord to that House by two to one, no less than 470 out of the 675 members who formed that part of the learned lord's constituency had petitioned against the Bill. (Hear, hear.) Those hon. members who represented Scotch constituencies must be aware that the Bill was repugnant to their feelings. (Hear, hear.) Under these circumstances, why had such a Bill been introduced? There were two possible solutions, and the first was that by some unfortunate accident the right hon. and learned lord, instead of consulting his own and other constituencies, in order to be informed of the wishes of the people at large, had chosen to refer to a few ministers belonging to the Free Church and the United Presbyterian body, who, from a feeling of jealousy towards the Established Church of Scotland, were anxious that a Bill of this description should be passed. Another solution was to be found in the fact that Scotland was to be made a lever by which the Government sought to win back those Nonconformists who, since 1868, had withdrawn from them their support. He hoped, however, that in the result the anticipations based upon that hope would not be successful. (Hear, hear.)

Mr BENTINCK commented on the remarkable silence which had been maintained during the discussion on the Liberal benches, and expressed his inability to account, except by the supposition that as last year in the debates on the Ballot Bill orders had been issued from high authority on their own side. There was, however, another and, perhaps, a still more plausible reason for it, and that was that a schism existed in the opposite ranks; but be that as it might, he and those with whom he acted were opposed to the present measure, because they had a prejudice in favour of mingling Christian teaching with education—a prejudice which might not be shared by the right hon. gentleman at the head of the Government. They were also opposed to the Bill, because its obvious interest was to establish the principle of purely secular education throughout Scotland. (Hear, hear.) And what, he should like to know, had Scotland done that she should be supposed to feel less interest than England in Christian teaching? He might remind English members, too, that that which was once established in the former country would soon be drawn into a precedent for the latter, and that we should have a system such as that which it was proposed to carry out by the Bill sooner or later set up on

this side of the Border. He had, he might add, listened to a great many discussions on the subject of education, and always, he must confess, with the feeling that we were farther from a satisfactory solution of it than ever. The reason was that there was too much sectarian acrimony introduced into the question, both in the House and out of doors. If people would only deal with it in a different spirit, it might be solved without much difficulty. Many objected to all education; some of them because they were utterly indifferent on the subject, others because they believed that the advantages of education were abused. The right honourable gentleman at the head of the Government, for instance, had learned to read, but if he had never done so he could not have read the *Secularists' Manual* to a public meeting of his countrymen, full as it was of communistic teaching and infidel doctrines. (A laugh.) He had no wish, however, to treat the present as a party question (a laugh), and, therefore, he would point out that in another high quarter also there had been an abuse of the advantages of elementary education. He trusted that the details of this Bill would be carefully considered in Committee. To educate without religious instruction was simply to put a dangerous weapon into the hands of a man who did not know how to use it. If you educate a man without seeking to make a Christian of him, you simply intrusted him with the power of mischief without any controlling influences. He could not understand how any religious man could uphold a system of purely secular education. Were such a system persevered with, he believed it would be a retrograde step in civilisation in this country, a movement towards barbarism; but he had faith in the strong sense entertained by the people of this country of the value of religious education, and was sure they would scout any proposal like that contained in the Bill. (Hear, hear.)

Mr HERMON said he had been requested by some Scotch friends of his, if there was a silence on that side of the House, to endeavour to represent the people of Scotland. (Hear, hear.) Not only did the Scotch people wish the Bible to be read, but they wished it to be explained and taught in the schools. If that were not the feelings of the people, he hoped that Scotch members opposite would stand up and say so. (Hear, hear.) Meanwhile, he heartily supported the motion.

Mr GREENE said as no Scotch member opposite would defend the system of education which the Scotch people desired, he would endeavour to do so. He was never more surprised than to find that such a motion was necessary when applied to Scotland, a country beyond all others desirous of having the people religiously taught, and of making religion the groundwork of education. He was afraid the question to-night was that of the Prime Minister *versus* Scotland ("Hear, hear," and laughter), and that Scotch members would sacrifice a great principle to support a Government. If so, they were very good ministerialists, but very bad Scotch Members. (Hear, hear.) Let this be told from one end of the land to the other. An American gentleman of high station who was staying with him lately, told him that in his opinion a purely secular education in the United States was undermining the religious principles of the people, and that infidelity was making rapid progress. As to England, the House had decided to retain clause 25 (hear, hear), yet hon. members on his side of the House were now endeavouring to defend the same principles against the Government. He was sure the Scotch people would thank them for what they were doing to-night; and he was very much mistaken if Scotch members who voted against this motion ever returned to the House. (Hear, hear.) For many reasons he should regret this result, being conservative enough to regret missing the faces he was accustomed to. (Laughter.) The Prime Minister had been followed too long. For once let hon. members opposite to-night give an honest vote, and assert the vital importance of religious education among the people. (Hear, hear.)

Mr J. G. TALBOT said he should have thought that the motion would have been unanimously adopted. By the votes against the motions of the hon. members for Birmingham and Sunderland, the feeling of the people of England seemed all but unanimous on this question. But there was an attempt to heal the differences of the party opposite on the question of Scotch education, and there had also been an attempt by a snap division to defeat the motion, and thus stultify the opinion of the House pronounced on the two occasions he had mentioned. That was the reason why the silence of hon. gentlemen opposite was so ominous, and hon. members on that (the Opposition) side had endeavoured to keep up

the debate, in order that a full attendance of the House might be able to express its views decidedly on the question before it. It would be seen at a glance that religion was not honoured in the Bill of the Lord Advocate, though it might be true that it was not excluded, and the hon. and learned member for the University of Glasgow attempted by his resolution to recall the House to the position which religion ought to occupy. But how had the hon. and learned gentleman and those who had supported him been met? They had not been told that the object of the resolution would be carried out in Committee; all that they had had from the other side was determined silence. (Hear, hear.) But this was a subject on which hon. members opposite ought to have a good deal to say. The Vice-President of the Council was a man who had carried through one of the most important Acts on the subject of education that had ever been passed in this country. The Prime Minister, as every one knew, not only took an interest in the question of education, but was closely connected by ancestry with the portion of the kingdom with which this Bill had to deal. But from neither of these right hon. gentlemen had a word fallen on this important question. (Hear, hear.) The hon. member for Perth (Mr Kinnaid) occupied a well-known position in the religious world (laughter and "hear, hear"); the hon. gentleman figured occasionally on the platforms of Exeter Hall, and yet he had not a word to say. (A laugh.) There were other hon. gentlemen opposite representing Scotch constituencies, and from only two of them this evening had the House heard the least expression of opinion. (Hear, hear.) But, putting together the silence of the Government, and of what he would call the distinctly religious portion of the Liberal party, and the anxiety of the secular portion of that party for a division, gentlemen on that (the Opposition) side were perfectly justified in giving their support to the resolution of the hon. and learned member, and taking care that no division should be come to except in a full House. (Hear, hear.)

Mr COLLINS said there had been rather an unseemly spectacle this evening. (Ministerial cheers.) But hon. gentlemen opposite had fallen into a great mistake, and had not acted with the caution and discretion which usually characterized their proceedings. He met the hon. member for Chatham this morning, and

when that hon. gentleman asked when the division would be, he told him he supposed about half-past 11. Hon. members opposite ought to have known very well that there was no chance of their obtaining a snap division on this important question. It would, therefore, have been more in accordance with the usual proceedings of the House to have endeavoured in some shape to reply to the arguments brought forward on that side. English members had a right, in looking at this Bill, to compare it with the measure of 1870, and to see how far, being a worse Bill, it might be made a precedent for England on a future occasion. (Hear.) They had a right to inquire whether it was in the interest of the friends of religious education—that is, of those who wished that the schoolmaster should combine religious with secular teaching—or in the interest of the Birmingham party, who wished as far as possible to divorce religious from secular teaching, that the Bill was framed. Because the model dogma of this sect was that it was improper that the schoolmaster, whether paid out of the Consolidated Fund or out of the rates, should be the person to give religious instruction. The English Bill was intended, as far as possible, to supply deficiencies where deficiencies were proved to exist, and it contained this principle—that the new schools, and the schools in the hands of voluntary managers, should be placed on precisely the same footing. (Hear.) He did not find that principle in the Scotch Bill. In the English Bill every school was a public elementary school which had these characteristics. The children must pay a certain amount of school pence, the schools must be open to inspection, and they must have a conscience clause. The English system was one which permitted the creation from time to time, and the continuance side by side, of Roman Catholic schools, Jewish schools, and schools of any particular denomination. But in this Bill the definition of a public elementary school was quite different. In the 64th clause it was said that there should be no fresh denominational schools, except in those cases where the majority of the children of the district was of the creed of the schools proposed to be established. This was neither more nor less than establishing a religious census. Suppose a parent in Scotland wished to send his child to a United Presbyterian school, an Established Church school, an Episcopalian, or Roman Catholic school, were they going to prevent him? If they did, it would be narrowing the

right of the parent. This Bill narrowed still further the time in which religious instruction might be given, and he objected to the provisions on this subject, because they might be cited at some future time as a precedent for introducing a similar limit in England. It had been shown by the School Board elections, all over the country, and very recently by the signal defeat of Mr George Potter in Westminster, that the great mass of the people were in favour of combined religious and secular education, and that the contrary opinion was held by only a small minority. (Hear, hear.) One great defect of the present measure was the omission of the cumulative vote, which in this country had made the School Boards reflect truly the opinions of the inhabitants of each district. (Hear.) Indeed, a true reflex of the opinions of the inhabitants of a district was only obtainable by ward elections or by the cumulative vote, which in England had had the effect of making our educational system really national. It was a very significant fact, that when last year his hon. friend, the member for Birmingham (Mr Dixon), proposed the repeal of the cumulative vote, he found no supporter except the hon. and learned member for the city of Oxford (Mr Vernon Harcourt), and dared not press his motion to a division. This fact showed what a preponderance of opinion was in favour of the cumulative vote, and he could not but regard its omission from this Bill as a retrograde step in legislation. The *animus* of the Bill was in the direction of the opinions of the Birmingham League. ("Hear, hear.") With regard to the amendment of his right hon. friend, he should vote in support of it. (Hear.)

Mr W. E. FORSTER, who on rising was received with loud cheers from the Opposition, said the hon. members opposite cheered as if a division were impossible, and he confessed that, judging from the manner in which this debate had been conducted, he should have been inclined to think at one time that it was scarcely intended to take a division. Much had been said about the silence on that side of the House, and it might, therefore, be desirable that he should say a few words respecting the cause of that silence. (Hear, hear.) A large majority of Scotch members, and of other hon. gentlemen who took an interest in the subject of education, were anxious at the commencement of the discussion, and were still anxious, that the evening should not be altogether lost and wasted.

(Hear, hear.) It must be remembered that Scotland was anxiously looking for an Education Bill, and the Government thought the time had come when the question could be no longer delayed. Undoubtedly there had been silence on his side of the House, but the reason was that there would otherwise have been either a renewal of a sufficiently full debate on the second reading, or an advocacy of amendments which would properly be uttered when they were proposed in Committee. The right hon. gentleman himself (Mr Gordon) had put an amendment on the paper, and hon. members had repeatedly diverged from the resolution to proposed amendments in the Bill which had nothing to do with it. ("No, no.") Some remarks which had been made made it almost impossible that hon. members opposite could have read the Bill. The education of the hon. member for Norfolk (Mr Bentinck) clearly had not reached that point, or he would not have described it as a purely secular Bill. Criticisms of this kind had almost made him doubt whether he was the same man and was sitting in the same place that he had occupied a year or so ago. (A laugh.) The Bill was based on exactly the same principles as the English Bill. ("No, no.") There might be differences of details as to the conscience clause, which could be discussed at the proper time, but because religious instruction was to begin or close the day it did not follow that this was a secular Bill. For his own part, if he supposed it did anything to discourage religious instruction, he would have nothing to do with it (hear, hear),—first, because it would be contrary to Scotch even more than to English feeling, and secondly, because it would be wrong. The principle of the Bill was that nothing should be done either to prevent or to compel religious instruction. It would be a sad thing for Parliament to discourage such instruction, and there was no surer way of discouraging it than to compel it. (Hear, hear.) It would be as much discouraged thereby as by the proposal to prohibit it, which he had contended against in England. Now, the resolution ostensibly proposed only to continue what now existed, but what was meant by it was that instruction in the Holy Scriptures should be binding in every school in Scotland. Was not that what was meant? The resolution conveyed the impression—the existing law required this, but he met to-day a deputation of earnest Scotch clergymen, who, in answer to his questions, informed him that the present law did not compel religious teaching,

and that they believed it would not prevent heritors from making schools entirely secular. ("No, no.") The resolution, in order to be candid, ought either to prove that the existing law required religious teaching or admit that the object was to make a fresh law. He was glad to know that it had been the practice to give such teaching, and he feared that if the custom was converted into a law there would be a danger of losing the practice. There was a small but active minority who conscientiously thought that religious instruction should be separated from secular teaching, many of them setting an example to those around them in their endeavours to implant religion in those with whom they came in contact. To pass a law compelling them to have religious instruction would be the surest way in this religious country of discouraging such instruction. The right hon. gentleman in his amendment to clause 50 virtually admitted that the present law did not require that construction, for it contained a proviso that in all schools instruction in the Scriptures should be given. The Bill, like the English Act, proposed to give perfect freedom to teach religion, and perfect freedom to parents to withdraw their children from it. It might be regretted that religious differences prevented the imposition of religious teaching by law, but the state both of England and Scotland must be considered. He was surprised that many members opposite who supported the principle of the English Act should advocate this resolution, for did they put themselves into the position of Scotchmen they would see that what was useful in England would be useful in Scotland, and what was dangerous here would be dangerous there. (Hear, hear.) His hon. friend, Mr M'Laren, who had somewhat advocated the resolution, had stated that the Act of 1861 contained a clause which, while not compelling religious instruction, apparently assumed that it would be given, the schoolmaster having to sign a declaration that he would not interfere with religious instruction. The experience of subscriptions, however, in other quarters, had shown that an obligation not to interfere with religious instruction was not an obligation to support it. It was true that the master engaged to teach nothing contrary, as he hoped he never would, to the Divine authority of the Scriptures, but he also engaged to inculcate nothing opposed to the Shorter Catechism. If, therefore, the law was in the state contended for, it required not only the Bible but the Catechism to be taught, and to continue the existing law would involve the teaching of both. This fact of itself showed the difficulty of fore-

ing religious instruction. Interested as he was in the cause of education, and also in religious education, he had felt himself bound to explain that the Bill was based on the principles laid down in England, and he hoped some little progress would still be made to-night in Committee.

Mr HARDY was glad that his right hon. friend, the mover of the resolution, and Scotland, which by its petitions had displayed its interest in the question, had at last had the honour of some remarks from the right hon. gentleman opposite. The Lord Advocate said this was practically only an amendment, and might be discussed afterwards. If that line were always taken, it would be easy to avoid discussion in the full state of the House which was so desirable upon questions of importance. Discussion of a clause was a very different thing from discussion of a principle. (Hear, hear.) However important a clause might be, the same discussion and the same interest were never displayed upon it as when the discussion was upon a question of principle. (Hear, hear.) It was not intended by the resolution to stop the progress of the Bill, but to carry out a principle which appeared suitable to Scotland and according to the desires of Scotland. The House had been told on many occasions they were to look to the particular wants of each country. The right hon. gentleman at the head of the Government said it was wrong to adopt English opinions in looking at Ireland, or Irish opinions in looking at England. Why, then, did the Vice-President of the Council maintain that because certain principles were enacted in the English Bill they should be necessarily enacted also in the Scotch Bill? We should look at the country and the position of the country before coming to a conclusion of that description. The right hon. gentleman said much time had been lost this evening. Well, time was lost last year when the same course was taken by the Government and hon. gentlemen opposite. (Hear, hear.) This House was a place meant for discussion. (Cheers.) Discussions might now and then be raised there which were unpalatable to hon. members opposite, just as other discussions might be raised by them which were unpalatable to hon. members on his side of the House. But it was derogatory to the dignity of the House when a member in the position of his hon. and learned friend (Mr Gordon), representing a Scotch University, and representing also the feelings of large portions of the community, moved a resolution which was treated almost with contempt by gentlemen on the other side of the House.

(Cheers.) If his friends were to act in the same manner, it would bring the House to a condition which would be neither creditable to itself nor advantageous to the country. At all events, the studied silence with which the motion had been received made it the duty of members on his side to take care that the House, which had been invited to this discussion, should be full before any decision was come to. (Hear, hear.) The Vice-President of the Council had alluded to the declaration in the Act of 1861, by which the schoolmaster bound himself not to teach anything opposed to the Holy Scriptures or the doctrines contained in the Shorter Catechism. Now, the Lord Advocate of that day distinctly stated that the schoolmaster was to teach these doctrines and the Holy Scriptures. This, therefore, was the meaning of the Bill of 1861. The declaration went on to say:—"I will faithfully conform thereto in my teaching in the said school, and I will not exercise the functions of my office to the prejudice of the Church of Scotland." The learned lord said there was no legislation calling upon the schoolmaster to teach religion in the school; but did not this clause mean that the schoolmaster was bound to teach it, in conformity with the system established in 1567? Again, the learned lord gave the House to understand that there were no means of enforcing such teaching. But section 13 in the Act of 1861 provided that if any schoolmaster acted in contravention of his declaration the heritors might present a complaint to the Secretary of State, who might thereupon appoint a Commission to inquire into the said charge, and censure, suspend, or deprive such schoolmaster, their finding being subject to approval by the Secretary of State. There was, therefore, existing legislation which provided for religious teaching in the schools. The Vice-President of the Council said, "If such legislation exists, why re-enact it now?" The answer was because by a clause in the Bill all the existing Acts were repealed, so that the present continuity of religious teaching would be interrupted. (Hear, hear.) The circumstances of England differed from those of Scotland. When the English Education Bill was proposed there was not a single public school to deal with, but only voluntary schools. In Scotland, on the contrary, there were schools which were the inheritance of the nation, which had been the foundation of the greatness of Scotland, and for three hundred years had been conducted on one uniform principle. Since 1567 it had been the practice to teach the Holy Scriptures in the parochial schools of Scotland, and to teach the Scriptures in such a way that, though without a conscience clause,

this religious teaching was conducted without injury to the religion of other people. Therefore, this Bill was introduced under circumstances differing entirely from those under which the English Bill had been brought forward, and it would interfere in Scotland with public schools which were working well, and were also working in conformity with the wishes and feelings of the Scotch people. Should the system in these schools be given up to the Local Boards which were to be established, thus furnishing matter for perpetual strife and contention? A league had been formed in Scotland in conformity with some abstract theory, and sought to put an end to a system which had done so much in practice for the education of the Scotch people. Persons who acted on abstract theories were the most disagreeable of all people to deal with. No matter how well a system worked, if it did not coincide with their theories they condemned it utterly. Some had even hoped to make martyrs of themselves upon this question, in the hope of awakening sympathetic enthusiasm at public meetings, and they purchased this cheap martyrdom at the expense of introducing dissension into peaceful parishes. All the Government was asked to do was to leave the existing system alone, and not to force a Bill upon the Scotch people which, while it professed to be harmless, was evidently designed to make secular instruction the rule. (Hear, hear.) The present rule was that no school should receive a Parliamentary grant unless it was in connection with some religious body, or unless the Scriptures were read in it; so that this Bill would not only interfere with the parochial school, but with every other school participating in the grant. He was told that the teachers were to be forbidden to teach religion; how, then, was it to be taught? Even the Nonconformist bodies in England had training colleges for the purpose of instructing their teachers in religious knowledge, with a view to their imparting that knowledge to their pupils. By petitions and public meetings the people of Scotland had declared against that part of the Bill to which he had objected, and, inasmuch as it was most desirable that the House should lay down the principle that an existing system which was satisfactory to the people should not be disturbed, he would vote most cordially for the motion of his right hon. friend. (Applause.)

Sir R. ANSTRUTHER said the obvious effect of the motion from the opposite side of the House would be to prevent the Bill being proceeded with. ("No, no.") It was impossible to say this was

not a party proceeding. The motion came as an amendment to the motion that the Speaker leave the chair. If it were carried, the Speaker would not leave the chair, and there would be an end of the Bill. It was obvious this result was desired. The hon. member for Rutland (Mr Noel) had been all the evening employing those winning ways which made him deservedly popular on both sides of the House, to induce hon. members to continue the debate until the Opposition was fortified to its full strength and in readiness for a division. What else could have been the reason for English members continuing the debate when Scotch members were anxious to go into Committee and proceed to business? This Bill would not prevent the teaching of religion in schools. All that the 13th clause did was to prevent a teacher teaching anything but doctrine accepted by the Scotch people. There was no statutory obligations upon any one in the Scotch schools to teach religion; it was the custom to do so in every school, because the people desired it; as long as they desired it, they would have it, and, if they ever ceased to desire it, no Acts of Parliament would make them continue a system of religious teaching they objected to. The hon. member for Boston made a shrewd remark when he said the Bill allowed School Boards to teach creeds and as much religion, in fact, as they liked, whereas other hon. gentlemen opposite denounced the measure as being purely secular. He agreed with that observation of the hon. member for Boston, and he hoped to see amendments introduced into the Bill to confine within certain limits that power of the School Boards. The course of action taken by the Government was to put confidence in the people of Scotland, and to say that the people of Scotland knew what they wanted, and should have it. (Hear, hear.)

Mr NEWDEGATE said that the people of Scotland objected to that Bill because it would introduce into that country the authority of the Privy Council, instead of the authority of the law as it now existed. They were content to have religious education enforced under the present law, but they objected to have it enforced by the authority of a department. (Hear.) They had some ground for their suspicions on that point, because twice during the discussions on the English Elementary Act of 1870 the House had, at the instigation of the Government, emphatically rejected proposals for making Scriptural education an essential part of that Act. Yet

the right hon. gentleman (Mr Forster), as if to console the Scotch people, assured them that this Bill was framed on the same principles as the English Elementary Act. Hon. gentlemen opposite were so much better Ministerialists than they were members for Scotland, that they would reject the resolution now before the House because it distinctly affirmed that religious and Scriptural teaching which had been the leading principle of Scotch education for centuries.

Lord J. MANNERS said that the hon. baronet, the member for Fifeshire (Sir R. Anstruther), breaking the long silence which had prevailed on the other side of the House, came forward at the last moment to inform them as to what would be the result of carrying the amendment of his hon. and learned friend (Mr Gordon). He ventured, however, to state that the information which the hon. baronet had given them was entirely erroneous, and, if acted upon, would lead the House into a very grave misconception. The hon. baronet told them that if the amendment were adopted it would be fatal to the further progress of that measure. Now, he would assert—and he appealed to the Speaker whether he was not correct in asserting—that if the House acceded, as he trusted it would do, to the amendment of his hon. and learned friend, it would be perfectly competent for the Government to proceed with the Bill on the very first day they chose to bring it forward, and that the amendment would be found to be in strict accordance, not only with the main principles of the measure as sustained in argument by the Government, but with the recognised forms and practice of the House. (Hear, hear.)

The House divided, when the numbers were—

For the resolution, - - - - -	216
Against, - - - - -	209
Majority, - - - - -	—7

On the paper on which the numbers were written being handed to Mr Gordon, the cheers from the Opposition Benches were so loud and continuous that he was unable for some minutes to announce the result of the division to the House. The announcement having been made, it was followed by another burst of cheering, which lasted for some time.

The words proposed by Mr Gordon were then added, and the question thus amended was put as the main question, when the Government declined a second division, for obvious reasons, and allowed the resolution to be carried unanimously on the merits.

APPENDIX.

PAIRS.

<i>For Government.</i>	<i>For Resolution.</i>
Henry James,.....	Sir Geo. Jenkinson, Bart.
Sir George Grey, Bart.,.....	J. Hardy.
G. E. Browne,.....	Colonel Clive.
C. Gilpin,.....	Sir James Stronge, Bart.
— Howard,	Viscount Newry.
Sir Thos. Bazley, Bart.,.....	Douglas Straight.
Sir J. Trelawny, Bart.,.....	Sir L. Palk, Bart.
Jacob Bright,.....	Sir S. Northcote, Bart.
N. G. Lambert,.....	S. Cave.
Colonel French,.....	Charles Wynn.
John Locke,.....	Gab. Goldney.
— Torrens,.....	Geo. Ward Hunt.
— Fortescue,.....	Colonel Knox.
M. Bass,.....	Colonel Grant.
T. E. Headlam,.....	Colonel Cole.
— Samuelson,.....	— Lowther.
Major O'Reilly,.....	— Johnston.
G. Hodgkinson,.....	Sir R. Buxton.
W. F. Cogan,.....	W. T. Mitford.
Edmund Dease,.....	W. H. Gore Langton.
Sir T. D. Lloyd, Bart.,.....	John Leslie.
F. W. Cadogan,.....	G. C. Bentinck.
Alfred Seymour,.....	Guildford Onslow.
Lord C. Bruce,.....	Lord Henry Thynne.
— Brand,.....	A. Staveley Hill.
Colonel Amcotts,.....	A. J. Beresford Hope.
The O'Connor Don,.....	S. G. S. Sackville.
John St. Aubyn,.....	Colonel E. Corbett.
John Platt,.....	Thomas Meyrich.
George Waters,.....	Lord Ang. Hervey.
Samuel S. Marling,.....	Sir M. Beach, Bart.
Henry Strutt,.....	T. B. Hildyard.
Edward Horsman,.....	Henry Barnett.
Major G. Gavin,.....	Colonel Vendeleur. †
Sir Henry Davie, Bart.,.....	Thomas Baring.
George Melly,.....	Captain Dawson Damer.





